

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 03758 061451Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 /026 W
-----032166 061454Z /47

Z O 061431Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH 8577
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 3758

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, PINT, LE, IS, SY
SUBJ: RESIGNATION OF PRESIDENT SARKIS

REF: BEIRUT 3752

1. AMBASSADOR DISCUSSED PRESIDENT SARKIS' DETERMINATION TO RESIGN WITH GOL UN AMBASSADOR TUENI AT LUNCH IMMEDIATE FOLLOWING AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH SARKIS AND BOUTROS (REFTEL - NOTAL). TUENI SAID THAT ACCORDING TO LEBANESE CONSTITUTION, PRESIDENT WOULD DESIGNATE A CHRISTIAN PRIME MINISTER TO SERVE TEMPORARILY WHEN HE RESIGNED AND INTENDED TO NAME MICHEL KHOURY. WITHIN THREE DAYS, THE PARLIAMENT SHOULD MEET TO ELECT A NEW PRESIDENT. TUENI SAID THAT BY DESIGNATING MICHEL KHOURY (THE SON OF FORMER LEBANESE
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PRESIDENT BECHARA KHOURY) AS TEMPORARY PRIME MINISTER SARKIS WOULD BE INDICATING HIS CHOICE FOR THE NEXT PRESIDENT. HOWEVER, TUENI DOUBTED THAT MICHEL KHOURY WOULD HAVE SUFFICIENT SUPPORT TO BE ELECTED BY THE PARLIAMENT. AMBASSADOR AND TUENI DISCUSSED OTHER POSSIBILITIES AND COULD NOT THINK OF ANYONE WHO MIGHT HAVE BOTH THE PERSONALITY AND EXPERIENCE TO LEAD THE COUNTRY AND ANY CHANCE OF BEING ELECTED.

2. TUENI REMARKED THAT ONE OF THE MANY DANGERS INVOLVED IN SARKIS' RESIGNATION WOULD BE THE FATE OF THE LEBANESE ARMY. IF AND WHEN THE PRESIDENT RESIGNED, HE SAID, HE DOUBTED WHETHER GENERAL KHOURY WOULD BE ABLE TO HOLD THE LEBANESE ARMY TOGETHER. THERE WAS A STRONG LIKELIHOOD THAT CHRISTIAN ELEMENTS OF THE LAF WOULD JOIN THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS WITHIN A FEW DAYS IF THE FIGHTING WITH THE SYRIANS CONTINUES.
PARKER

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NNN

Message Attributes

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